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A Factual Reply To: Is There Money In Sheep?
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(Condensed from Illinois Summary of 1965 Ewe Flock Production.) The number of records received from producers this year was 33% higher than the number received last year. Several records indicated that part of the flock lambled twice in 1965. These records have been summarized in Table 2. Both tables 1 and 2 provide information that you can use to evaluate your own flock's performance.

TABLE 1. Analysis of 1965 Ewe Flock Production Records

Item		Number of ewes per flock		
		26-50	51-100	Over 100
Percent of lambs born, based on number of ewes at breeding time	High	194	173	157
	Average	137	143	135
	Low	88	117	117
Percent of mortality, birth to weaning	High	30.0	21.4	18.1
	Average	11.9	11.7	11.1
	Low	0.0	3.7	5.7
Percent of mortality, birth to marketing	High	35.2	21.4	25.0
	Average	13.0	12.3	14.6
	Low	0.0	4.6	7.4
Gross return per ewe	High	\$49.92	\$56.72	\$40.58
	Average	\$34.10	\$35.75	\$34.79
	Low	\$18.18	\$22.02	\$29.76

TABLE 2. Analysis of 1965 Production Records for Flocks
in Which Part of the Ewes Lambled Twice

Item	Individual flocks					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Number of ewes in flock	15	19	36	43	48	90
Percent of lambs born, based on number of ewes at breeding time	207	221	211	244	179	178
Percent of mortality, birth to marketing	29.0	19.0	34.2	14.3	7.0	32.5
Gross return per ewe	\$45.23	\$58.32	\$38.61	\$53.31	\$47.13	\$34.38

To compare all flocks on a commercial ewe flock basis, "lambs on hand" were given a market value comparable to that of lambs sold; the value of purebred lambs was also determined on a market basis. The data in Table 1 were divided into groups according to number of ewes.

Gross return per ewe includes sales of lambs, wool, and incentive payments for both.

Of the 107 flock records included in the report, 24 flocks had gross returns of more than \$40 per ewe, five flocks returned more than \$50. On the other hand, six flocks had gross returns of less than \$25 per ewe. There was a difference of \$38.54 in gross return between flocks with the highest and lowest income (\$56.72 compared with \$18.18).

The following returns help to explain the large amount of variability in flock returns:

Percent of ewes failing to lamb
---0.0 to 38.5

Percent of mortality (birth to marketing)
---0.0 to 42.9

Percent of lamb crop born
---86 to 194

Lamb prices received (per lb.)
---18¢ to 29.5¢
(32-37¢ was received for Easter lambs)

Lamb selling weights (lb.)
---50 to 130

12-month fleece weights (lb.)
Per ewe ---6 to 16
Per ram ---6 to 24

The records included in Table 2 also show great variability in gross returns. Probably the 3 major factors here were 1) the number of ewes that actually lambed twice, 2) the number of ewes giving birth to twins or triplets, and 3) the percent of mortality from birth to marketing. Interest in multiple lambing has been increasing; indications are that it will continue to grow.

It should be apparent from this information that well-managed flocks can be highly profitable.